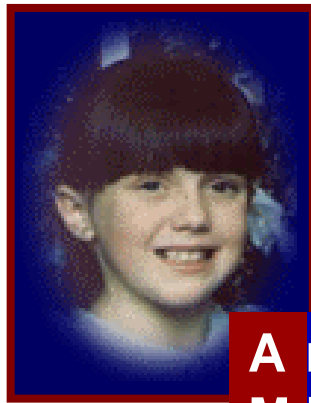# *Washington Statewide*
AMBER Alert Plan

A merica's
M issing
B roadcast
E mergency
R esponse

The Washington Statewide AMBER Alert Plan is named for 9-year-old Amber Hagerman of Arlington, Texas. In 1996, she was abducted while riding her bicycle and brutally murdered.

This Plan organizes a rapid response by law enforcement, broadcasters and the public to recover an abducted child and apprehend the suspect.

Approval of This Plan

On behalf of Washington broadcasters, local and state law enforcement, and agencies providing emergency management, transportation and Information Technology services, the undersigned agree to establish and adopt this Washington Statewide AMBER Alert plan.

Executive Sponsor	Signature	Date
Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs *--President* *(Sheriff, Douglas County)* **Dan LaRoche**		
Washington State Association of Broadcasters *--President & CEO* **Mark Allen**		
Washington State Patrol *-- Chief* **Lowell M. Porter**		
Washington Military Department *--The Adjutant General* **Major General Timothy J. Lowenberg**		
Department of Transportation *--Secretary* **Douglas B. MacDonald**		
Washington State Department of Information Services *-- Director and State CIO,* **Stuart McKee**		

1. Introduction

AMBER Alert in Washington is a program of voluntary cooperation between broadcasters, cable systems, and local and state law enforcement agencies to enhance the public's ability to assist in recovering abducted children. AMBER Alert notification is supported by the [AMBER Alert Web Portal](#) (Portal) and the [Emergency Alert System (EAS).](#) The Federal Communications Commission has authorized activation of the EAS for AMBER Alerts using the "child abduction emergency" code.

2. Scope and Authority of Statewide and Local AMBER Alert Plans

The Washington Statewide AMBER Alert Plan solely governs and authorizes the use of EAS and the Portal for AMBER Alerts throughout Washington State.

The Washington AMBER Alert Statewide Plan takes effect when the local law enforcement agency has determined in its investigation that the incident qualifies under the criteria of the Washington Statewide AMBER Alert Plan and the local law enforcement agency requests the WSP to initiate activation of the EAS and the Portal.

This statewide plan recognizes approved local AMBER Alert plans, which specify local law enforcement agency procedures to investigate a child abduction case, approve AMBER Alert activations, coordinate community response and direct the recovery of the child.

Local AMBER Alert plans previously approved by the State Emergency Communications Committee (SECC) are recognized as approved plans provided that activation criteria satisfy the Statewide AMBER Alert criteria in section 5.

By January 1st, 2005 all agencies without an approved plan will develop a plan or have a mutual aid agreement in place with an agency that has an approved plan. The approval process for local AMBER Alert Plans will include approval by the Local Area Emergency Communications Committee (LAECC) and the SECC.

3. AMBER Alert Activation Approval and Scope

Approval for activation of an AMBER Alert will be by the investigating agency, contingent on the agency having an existing approved AMBER Alert Plan. No further review of the decision is required. Investigating agencies that do not have an approved plan will use an agency with an approved plan through established mutual aid agreements as defined in section 2 above. Otherwise the WSP will be the approving agency. No other organizations are authorized to approve AMBER Alert activations.

The WSP (and agencies approving alerts for other agencies through mutual aid agreements) are accountable to provide timely activation decisions that are consistent with this plan's criteria and cognizant of the circumstances.

All AMBER Alert activations of the EAS and the Portal will be statewide in scope.

When an agency with an approved AMBER Alert plan decides to activate an AMBER Alert the agency must notify the WSP. The WSP will provide the local agency secured access to the Portal. The WSP, as the sole point of contact, will coordinate all AMBER Alert activities with the Emergency Management Division and the Department of Transportation on the local agency's behalf.

Following authorized approval of AMBER Alert activation and notification to WSP:

▪ The Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD) will activate the EAS for an AMBER Alert and is the only agency authorized to do so.

▪ The local law enforcement agency is authorized to use the Portal to activate, update and cancel the AMBER Alert as the case warrants. Upon request of the local law enforcement agency, the WSP may activate the Portal.

The approving agency will identify a point of contact for media and other law enforcement agencies at the time of activation.

When an incident does not qualify under the criteria for an AMBER Alert, the WSP will offer press releases, the Missing Children Clearing House, and other notification methods available at that time.

4. Governance of the Statewide AMBER Alert Plan

Local and state law enforcement, broadcasters, and emergency management officials combine their efforts through the following Statewide AMBER Alert governance model to recover abducted children.

State AMBER Alert Manager
The WSP is the lead agency for the Washington Statewide AMBER Alert Plan. The Chief of the WSP is the State AMBER Alert Manager and has final decision-making authority over all aspects of the Statewide AMBER Alert Plan. While the Chief of the WSP is ultimately accountable for program success, this responsibility is shared with other entities that form the AMBER Alert Advisory Committee.

AMBER Alert Advisory Committee
The AMBER Alert Advisory Committee provides administrative oversight to develop, implement, review, and recommend revisions to all aspects of the Washington Statewide AMBER Alert Plan. Such recommendations are made to the State AMBER Alert Manager. The AMBER Alert Advisory Committee charter further defines its purpose, membership, authority and decision making process.

AMBER Alert Review Committee
The AMBER Alert Review Committee conducts after action reviews of all AMBER Alert activation requests and alerts. It evaluates the effectiveness and timeliness of key decisions, actions, and results. The committee recommends policy and procedure improvements to the AMBER Alert Advisory Committee. This review committee is convened by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs and is further defined by its charter.

Portal Operations Group
This committee assesses Portal usability, recommends improvements and implements changes to the Portal. Recommendations are made to the Advisory Committee and the State AMBER Alert Manager.

State Emergency Communications Committee
This committee has been delegated authority by the FCC to create the State EAS plan and manage EAS operations in Washington. Broadcasters must comply with the SECC's State EAS Plan to be in compliance with FCC regulations.

5. AMBER Alert Criteria

All elements 1 through 5 should be satisfied, after considering all the facts and circumstances of the incident, for the incident to qualify as an AMBER Alert.

1. The child is under eighteen (18) years of age and is known to be abducted and is not a runaway or thrownaway from home.
2. The abducted child is believed to be in danger of death or serious bodily injury.
3. The AMBER Alert activation should occur within 4 hours of the event qualifying under the criteria as an AMBER Alert unless circumstances or the timeliness of the information warrant otherwise.
4. There must be enough descriptive information available to believe that an AMBER Alert activation will assist in the recovery of the child. (Must include as much of the following information as possible)
    √ Where the abduction took place;
    √ A specific physical description of the child [can include clothing worn when last seen; height, weight, age, hair and eye color, hair length, any additional distinguishing physical characteristics];
    √ A physical description of the abductor [can include approximate height, weight, hair color/length, eye/skin color, clothing; any distinguishing physical characteristics.]
    √ Place last seen;
    √ Description of the vehicle [can include color, make, model, license number, approximate year (older, newer);]
5. The incident must be reported to and investigated by a law enforcement agency.

6. Broadcaster Follow-up Announcement Schedule

Following the broadcast of the AMBER Alert EAS message through the state relay network, the message will be forwarded through broadcast media outlets.

At this time and throughout the alert, broadcasters should refer to the Portal at http://www.amberAlert911.com/ as the single source for the latest detailed AMBER Alert information and photos. The local law enforcement agency in charge will add updated information to the Portal as it becomes available. The Portal will automatically push simultaneous notification that new information is available to broadcasters, law enforcement, the public and many partners who forward AMBER Alerts to a wide collection of audiences.

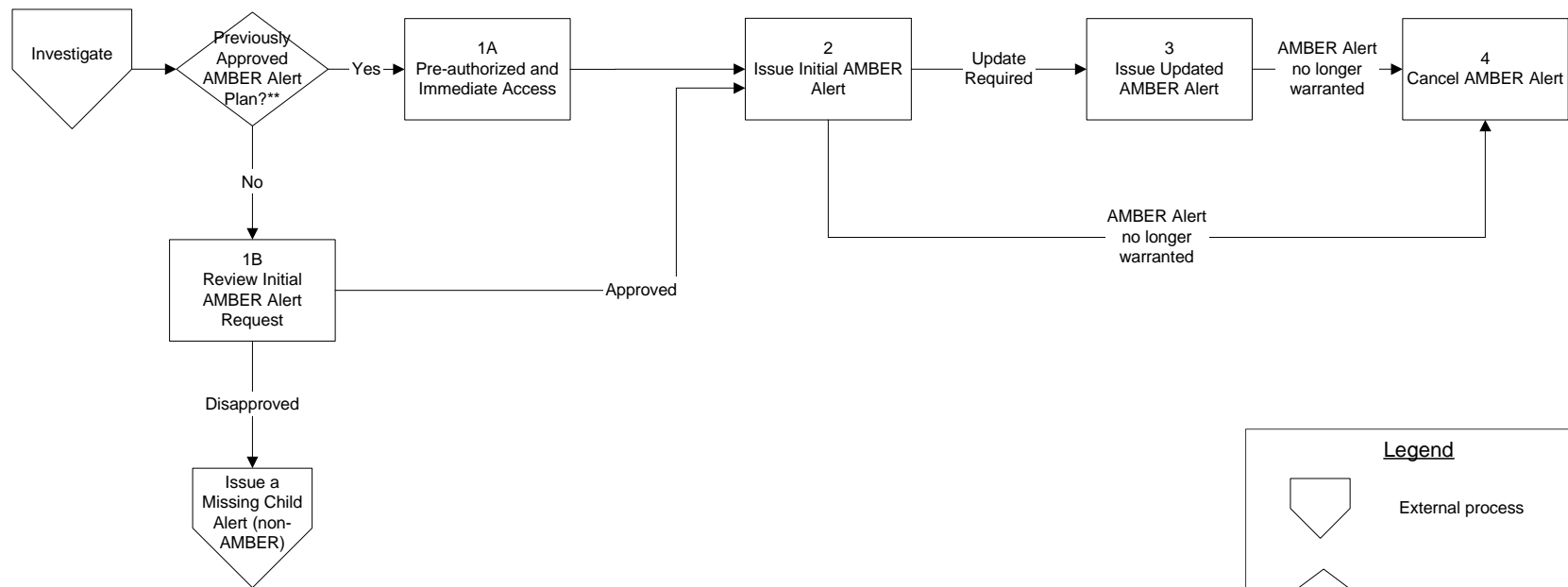Once the station has transmitted the initial AMBER Alert:

√   <u>During the first three (3) hours</u> after the broadcast of the initial AMBER Alert message the station should broadcast AMBER Alert follow-up announcements every 20 minutes, at a minimum, unless the AMBER Alert is terminated sooner. These messages should be announcements voiced by station personnel and can be incorporated into regular station programming as the station sees fit

√   The AMBER Alert follow-up announcements must not be a retransmission of the initial AMBER Alert, nor include the EAS header tones, event codes, etc.

√   <u>During the **second** three (3) hours</u> stations with live personnel should broadcast an AMBER Alert follow-up announcement once every half-hour, at a minimum, unless the AMBER Alert is terminated sooner.

√   <u>After six (6) hours</u>, the station, in its discretion, may continue to broadcast the AMBER Alert follow-up announcements until the AMBER Alert is formally terminated by the activating law enforcement agency, or at the agency's request.
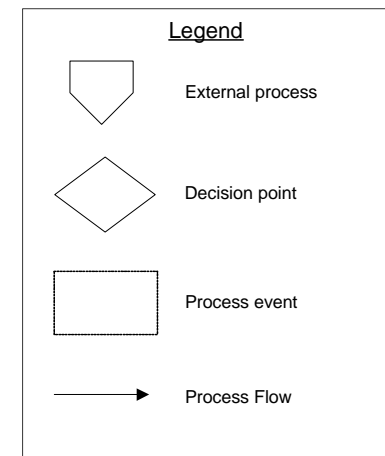
7. Procedures

The following diagram and associated event descriptions (in table format) reflects the high level AMBER Alert process flow and is further detailed in the AMBER Alert User Procedures.

Process Diagram

* A Law Enforcement agency with a previously approved AMBER Alert Plan or one with an existing mutual aid agreement with another Law Enforcement agency having an approved plan qualifies.*

Description of Process Events

Process Event	Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA)	Washington State Patrol (WSP)	WA State Emergency Management Division (EMD)	Broadcasters	WA Dept. of Transportation (WSDOT)
Investigate Incident *(External Processes)*	1. Investigate and compile the initial information				
1A. Pre-authorized and Immediate Access *(For those having a previously approved AMBER Alert Plan or having a developed mutual aid agreement with another LEA with an approved plan.)*	1. Determine that the AMBER Alert criteria is met 2. Notify WSP that LEA is activating an AMBER Alert 3. Reference you have a previously approved AMBER Plan	1. Check list of approved plans and proceed immediately with providing the LEA with a UserID, Password and URL to activate a Statewide AMBER Alert 2. Begin coordination with EMD, DOT			

Process Event	Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA)	Washington State Patrol (WSP)	WA State Emergency Management Division (EMD)	Broadcasters	WA Dept. of Transportation (WSDOT)
1B. Initial Review of AMBER Alert Request *(For those without a previously approved AMBER Alert Plan or having a developed mutual aid agreement with another LEA with an approved plan.)*	1. Determine that the AMBER Alert criteria is met 2. Request WSP to issue an AMBER Alert	1. Review and approve / disapprove LEA's request based on the approved statewide criteria 2. Notify LEA of approval			
If AMBER Alert criteria are not met: Issue a Missing Child Alert (non-AMBER) *(External Process)*	1. Receive notification of disapproval 2. Utilize other means (from WSP) to communicate "missing child" information 3. Examples: - Missing Children Clearing House - CISD staff to work the tip line - TRAK system - HITS Unit - other resources	1. Notify LEA of disapproval			

Process Event	Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA)	Washington State Patrol (WSP)	WA State Emergency Management Division (EMD)	Broadcasters	WA Dept. of Transportation (WSDOT)
2. Issue Initial AMBER Alert	1. Receive Portal User ID & Password 2. Issue the AMBER Alert via the Portal 3. May request EMD to forward the statewide tip line 4. Staff the tip line that was forwarded from EMD 5. Responsible for the on-going investigation	1. Issue a Portal User ID & Password to the LEA 2. Notify a single point of contact in EMD to issue the AMBER Alert via EAS 3. Notify a single point of contact in WSDOT to activate the Electronic Highway Signs and the Highway Advisory Radio	1. Receive the directive from WSP to issue the AMBER Alert via EAS using code "CAE" 2. Receive AMBER Alert information via the Portal 3. Issue the AMBER Alert via EAS 4. Activate NAWAS (911 centers) 5. If requested by LEA, forward the statewide tip line to the LEA for staffing incoming tips	1. Receive the AMBER Alert via EAS 2. Receive the AMBER Alert via Portal 3. Broadcast the AMBER Alert 4. Make follow-up AMBER Alert announcements (Ref: #6 above)	1. Receive the request from WSP to activate the Electronic Highway Signs and the Highway Advisory Radio 2. Receive the AMBER Alert information via the Portal 3. Activate the Electronic Highway Signs and the Highway Advisory Radio

Process Event	Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA)	Washington State Patrol (WSP)	WA State Emergency Management Division (EMD)	Broadcasters	WA Dept. of Transportation (WSDOT)
3. Issue Updated AMBER Alert	1. Disseminate updated information via Portal and other means as appropriate 2. May request WSP to disseminate updated information via PIO network	1. Receive updated information via Portal 2. If requested by LEA, disseminate updated information via PIO network 3. If conditions warrant, request EMD to issue update via EAS and DOT to update the Electronic Highways Signs and the Highway Advisory Radio	1. Receive updated information via Portal 2. If requested by WSP, issue update via EAS	1. Receive updated information via Portal 2. Broadcast updated AMBER Alert information 3. Go to AMBER Alert Web Portal to obtain information	1. Receive updated information via Portal 2. Update the Electronic Highway Signs and the Highway Advisory Radio (after conferring with WSP if necessary)

Process Event	Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA)	Washington State Patrol (WSP)	WA State Emergency Management Division (EMD)	Broadcasters	WA Dept. of Transportation (WSDOT)
4. Cancel AMBER Alert	1. Determine that the AMBER Alert Activation is no longer warranted 2. Enter information into the Portal 3. Notify WSP to cancel the AMBER Alert	1. Receive cancellation request from LEA 2. Notify a single point of contact in EMD of cancellation 3. Notify a single point of contact in DOT of cancellation	1. Receive cancellation notice from WSP 2. Issue cancellation using EAS code "ADR"	1. Receive cancellation via EAS (using "ADR" code) 2. Receive cancellation via Portal 3. Broadcast cancellation as a news item or other means -- but do not rebroadcast EAS cancellation message	1. Receive cancellation via Portal 2. Receive cancellation notice from WSP 3. Cancel the Electronic Highway Signs and the Highway Advisory Radio

8. Sample AMBER Alert EAS Message Script *(for use by EMD)*

This is an activation of the AMBER Alert System.

We have just received this important information regarding an abducted child in

_____. The _____ is
   (Area, District, City and/or County)   *(Law Enforcement Jurisdiction(s))*

looking for a child who was last seen at _____
                                                                        (Location)

and is believed to be in danger. The child's name is _____. He/She is
                                                                                (Name)

_____ years old, _____with _____ hair and was last seen wearing _____
   (age)   *(gender)*   *(color)*

_____.   Authorities say that the child may be in the
         (Description of clothing)

 company of _____ and they may be traveling in a
                      (Name, Description, clothing, etc.)

_____ that was last seen heading _____
(Vehicle make, model, color, license plate #)

_____. If you have any information on the whereabouts of
 (Direction and street/city location)

this child, _____, please contact _____ immediately.
                (Name or Description of Child)   *(contact telephone number)*

Sample AMBER Broadcaster Follow-up Announcement Text

"K*** has an Amber Alert advisory. An Amber Alert has been issued for Washington
State. K_____ (listeners/viewers) are advised to look for (vehicle description), driven by
(suspect description). The victim is (victim details) has been abducted by a non-family
member and is at risk of physical harm. If you see a (vehicle description), please dial
911 immediately, and tell the operator you have an Amber Alert sighting for the
Washington State Patrol dispatch. Again, if you see (vehicle description), please dial
911."